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*Drug file*

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(International Narcotics Series No. 6)

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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# Intelligence Memorandum

*International Narcotics Series No. 6*

*The French-Turkish Connection: The Movement of Opium  
and Morphine Base from Turkey to France*

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ER IM 71-236  
December 1971

## WARNING

This document contains information affecting the national defense of the United States, within the meaning of Title 18, sections 793 and 794, of the US Code, as amended. Its transmission or revelation of its contents to or receipt by an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**  
Directorate of Intelligence  
December 1971

**INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM**

**THE FRENCH-TURKISH CONNECTION:  
THE MOVEMENT OF OPIUM AND MORPHINE BASE  
FROM TURKEY TO FRANCE**

Conclusions

1. Opium and morphine base move in a steady flow from Turkey to Western Europe despite tighter international narcotics controls and stepped-up customs enforcement. French heroin traffickers continue to receive adequate quantities of raw narcotics materials at approximately the same prices as in 1960. The smuggling of morphine base directly between Turkey and France or West Germany has become the most common smuggling pattern.

2. Overland transport of narcotics by cars, trucks, and buses now appears to be the dominant means of smuggling. Smuggling by sea, the leading method of moving narcotics into France a decade ago, has become secondary although still the source of sizable quantities of narcotics. Smuggling by air, now a poor third, could increase because of lax customs procedures at most European airports.

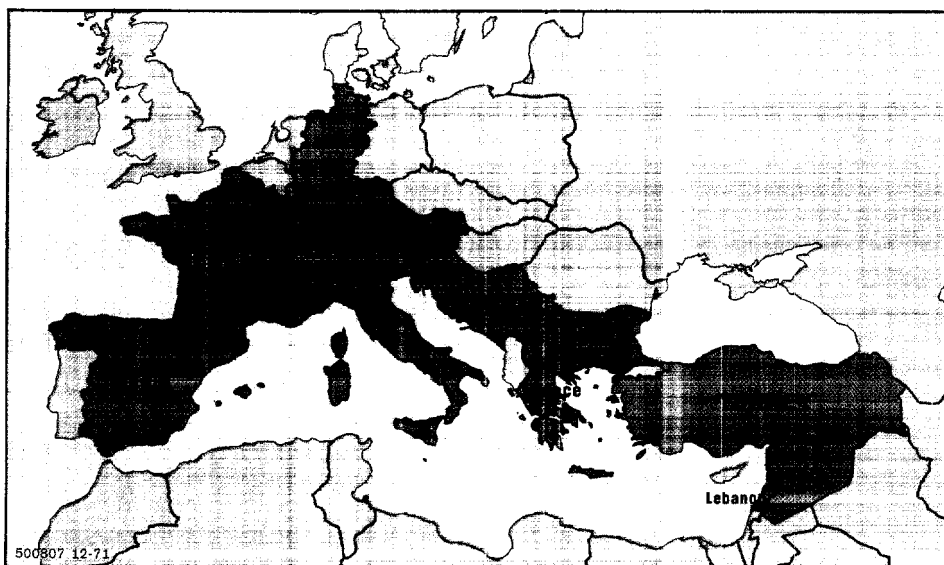
3. A striking development in recent years is the emergence of West Germany as a major narcotics storage and staging area. The entry of large numbers of Turkish and other Near Eastern workers into the West German labor force in recent years has facilitated this development. These workers as well as certain German nationals have become important links in the narcotics chain connecting suppliers of raw materials with the processors of finished product.

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Note: This memorandum was prepared by the Office of Strategic Research from information contained in the investigative files of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs and the Bureau of Customs. It has been coordinated within the Directorate of Intelligence as well as with the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs and the Bureau of Customs.

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4. French heroin traffickers are currently purchasing as much opium and morphine base as possible in order to build up their stocks of narcotics raw materials before licit Turkish opium production ceases at the end of 1972. The sparse information available on the future plans of traffickers suggests that they will turn first to Yugoslavia as an alternative source of supply. This action will have a minimal impact on the patterns and techniques of smuggling now existing in Europe. If adequate supplies are not forthcoming from Yugoslavia, however, these traffickers may turn to either Pakistani-Afghan sources or Southeast Asian sources. This would cause a major realignment in the smuggling routes now serving French traffickers.



### Discussion

#### Introduction

5. The largest heroin addict population in the Western World is found in the United States, although neither the raw materials for heroin nor its processing centers are located there. Most heroin found in the United States has traveled through an international narcotics pipeline largely controlled by Turkish and French connections before distribution by major US narcotics syndicates.

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6. The complex set of procedures involved in bringing the raw heroin materials to the processing centers and from there to the street vendors is not a smooth and continuous flow of product from supplier to consumer. Each phase represents a separate and independent process or transaction handled by various groups brought together by the alluring profits this traffic offers.

7. Raw materials for most of the heroin entering the United States originate in the opium poppy fields of Turkey. The opium is purchased from Turkish farmers by opium traffickers who often convert it into its concentrated morphine base powder form. The opium or morphine base is then resold to Turkish morphine base exporters who serve as the central connection between the suppliers of the raw materials and the French importers and processors. Although most of the opium and morphine base entering France comes from Turkey, some of these materials are also imported from Yugoslavia. Small quantities of opium and morphine base reportedly have also been imported from the Far East.

8. Once the opium and morphine base is smuggled into France, it is converted into its heroin form. The heroin is then smuggled into the United States where it is diluted, distributed, and diluted again before being sold to the addict. This memorandum reviews those operations of the international heroin pipeline controlled by French-Turkish connections and discusses opium production and morphine base conversion, the structure and function of the trafficking system, the smuggling of narcotics, and the outlook for this pipeline over the next few years.

#### Supply, Demand, and Control

9. There is no way to determine precisely how much opium has been produced in Turkey in recent years. The only accurate figures on this subject reflect the amount of opium purchased by the government of Turkey from authorized producing areas. Between 35% and 60% of Turkish opium production probably entered the illicit market in the past. The illicit markets for Turkish opium are France and Iran.

10. Although figures on the flow of illicit opium are not available, there is virtually a constant demand in France for Turkish opium, and a continuous effort is made by Turkish suppliers to meet that demand. Over the years this supply apparatus has become better organized in order to increase the volume of traffic on a year-round basis. A major opium trafficker operating in the interior of Turkey, for example, may be capable of handling up to 25 metric tons of illicit opium per year, while a major French morphine base importer may import three tons of morphine base per year. In addition to the constant cycle of orders and deliveries,

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additional supplies of opium and morphine base reportedly are being stockpiled in one-half ton to two ton quantities in storage depots located in West Germany and Turkey.

11. Increasingly stringent international narcotics controls have undoubtedly created more problems for the traffickers. These controls, however, are believed to have succeeded in interdicting only a small percentage of the opium and morphine base traveling from Turkey to France. The approximate amount of morphine base seized in various European countries over the last several years is shown in the table. Despite the progressive increase in the amount of narcotics seized, no critical shortage of these raw materials has been observed on the illicit market.

12. Tighter international controls on narcotics have not significantly raised the price for opium or morphine base over the last 10 years (Figure 1). The average price for illicit crude opium purchased in the interior of Turkey has actually dropped about 20%, from an average \$28 per kilogram in 1960 to about \$22 in 1971. The cost for one kilogram of morphine base purchased in Turkey has decreased by about 30% from an average of about \$500 in 1960 to about \$340 at the present time. Although the reasons for these price decreases are not clear, they may at least partially stem from larger-scale trafficking and better organization.

13. French traffickers now pay an average of about \$800 for each kilogram of morphine base purchased and delivered directly from Turkey. This is only about 15% higher than the price paid in 1960. This increase may be due to higher courier fees and transportation costs brought about by stricter international narcotics controls. Morphine base purchased through a middleman in West Germany will usually cost at least 50% more than when purchased directly from Turkey.

#### Opium Production

14. In early 1971, about 90,000 Turkish farmers cultivated opium poppies in the only seven provinces in western Turkey where such cultivation was allowed. The poppy is usually grown by small farmers who, because of the amount of labor needed, devote about one-half acre of their land for poppy cultivation. The opium poppy is now grown on some 15,000 hectares of farmland in four provinces.

15. Opium is collected by incising the poppy pod before the seeds ripen (Figure 2). In Turkey, this process is usually performed twice a year — around July and March. If the pod has been carefully slashed, a clear or white latex-like substance will begin to emerge. As the latex accumulates on the outside of the pod, it begins to evaporate, solidify, and darken.

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Morphine Base Seizures

									Kilograms
Year	France	Turkey	West Germany	Italy	Yugoslavia	Lebanon	Syria	Other	Total for Year
1971 (Jan- Aug)	520	180	180	0	N.A.	0	N.A.	(Bulgaria) 311	1,191
1970	386	32	2	146	24	16	N.A.	0	606
1969	284	53	200	0	0	0	N.A.	0	537
1968	30	215	7	0	0	19	N.A.	0	271
1967	136	138	19	10	27	10	15	(Spain) 1	356
1966	54	61	0	7	0	0	24	(Belgium) 36	182
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,410</i>	<i>679</i>	<i>408</i>	<i>163</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>348</i>	<i>3,143</i>

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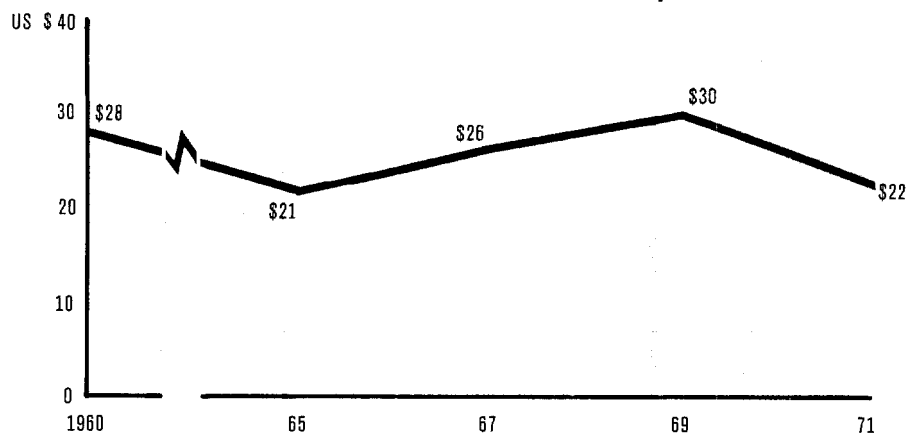
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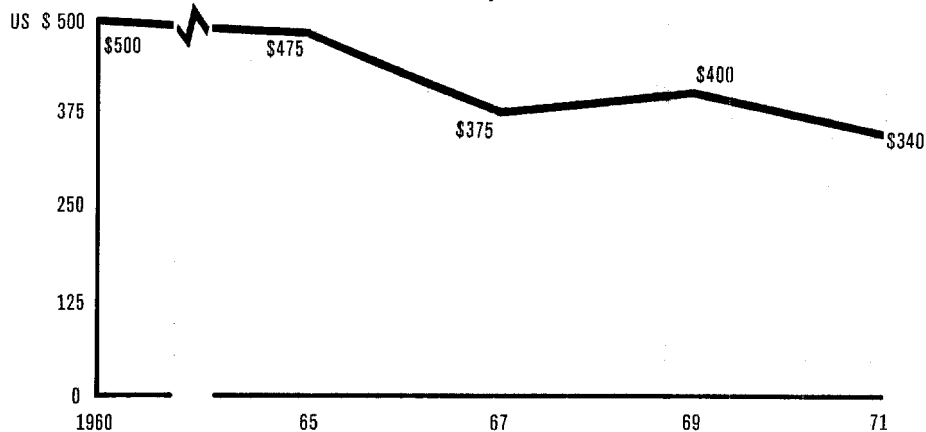
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Average Price for One Kilogram of Crude Opium Purchased on the Illicit Market in the Interior of Turkey\*

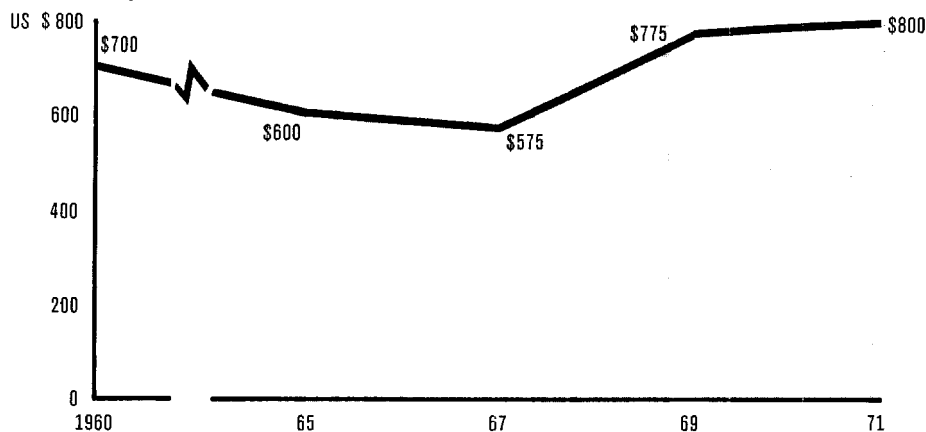
Figure 1



Average Price for One Kilogram of Morphine Base Purchased in Turkey\*



Average Price for One Kilogram of Morphine Base Delivered to France \*†



\*These figures represent general trends and do not reflect seasonal or other variations.  
 †Prices often increase by at least 50 percent when transaction involves a middleman in Germany.

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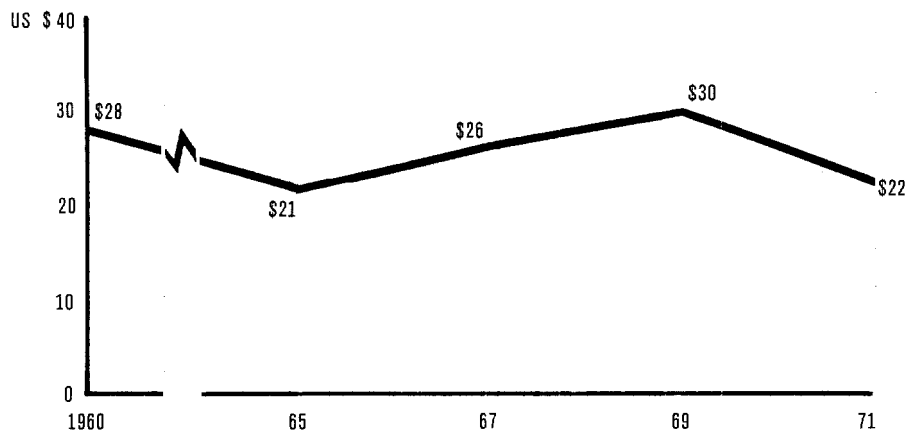
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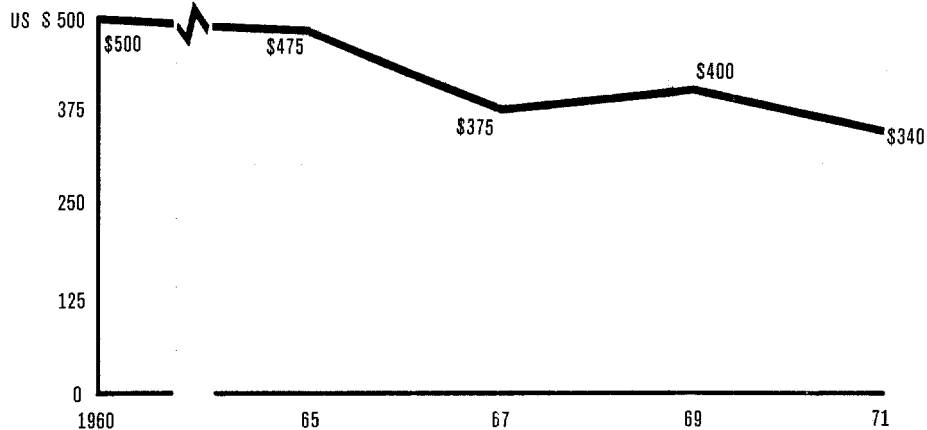
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Average Price for One Kilogram of Crude Opium Purchased on the Illicit Market in the Interior of Turkey\*

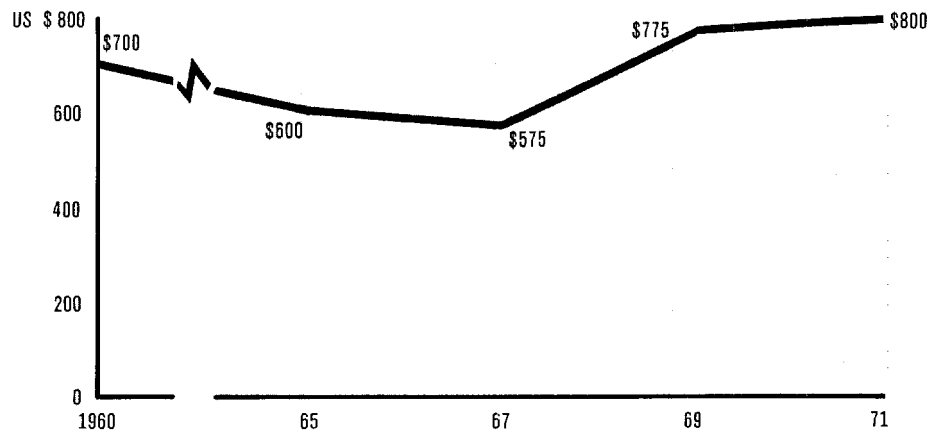
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Average Price for One Kilogram of Morphine Base Purchased in Turkey\*



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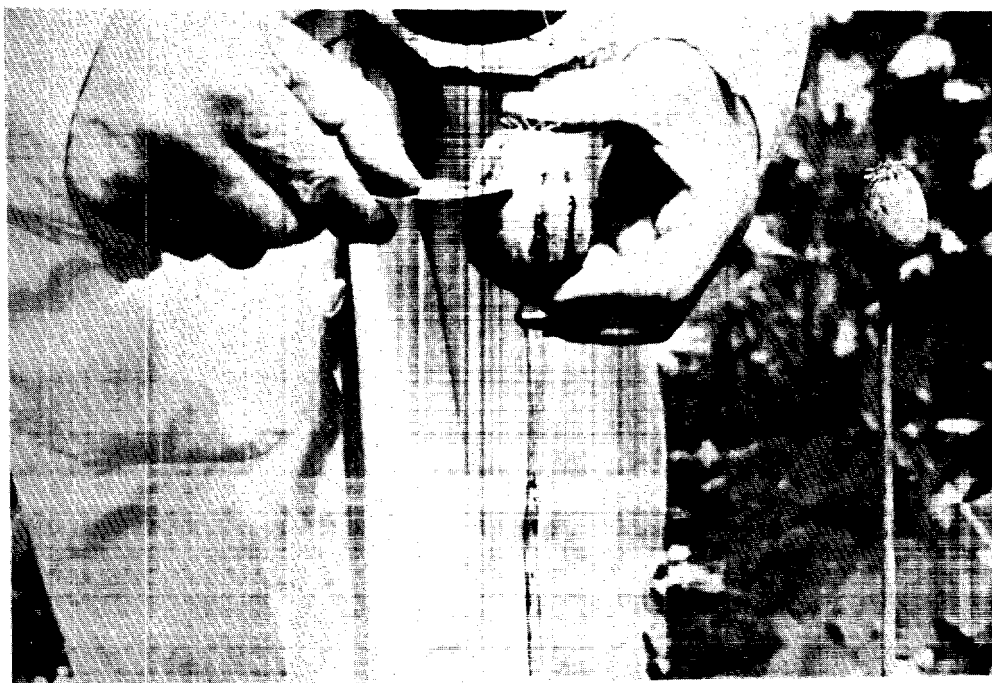


Figure 2. Incising the Opium Poppy

Approximately 10 hours after the incision, the now dark brown or black latex will have lost about one-third of its weight.

16. This sticky substance, known as raw or crude opium, is then scraped off the pod and collected. The pasty opium is formed into irregularly shaped flat or spherical cakes and wrapped in poppy leaves.

17. The incision and collection process reportedly requires about 72 working hours for each kilogram of opium. A good poppy field in Turkey yields about 15 kilograms of crude opium per hectare. For his work, a Turkish farmer receives from \$9 to \$11 for each kilogram of opium sold to the government. He can receive about twice that amount, however, if he chooses to sell his opium to a trafficker.

18. The main active chemical principle of opium is the alkaloid morphine, the sole source of the substance's analgesic, narcotic, and addictive properties. The morphine content of Turkish opium -- about 14% -- is one of the highest in the world and, therefore, Turkish opium is preferred by French heroin traffickers. About 10 kilograms of crude opium can be processed to yield one kilogram of morphine base. Skilled narcotics chemists, in turn, can convert one kilogram of morphine base into one kilogram of unadulterated heroin.

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### Morphine Base Conversion

19. The conversion of crude opium into morphine base is a fairly simple process. A conversion workshop is usually set up in a large room in an isolated private residence. It is often staffed by a "chemist," who in reality is often more like a good cook with chemicals, and two or three unskilled assistants, who may be paid \$5 or more for a day's work.

20. The basic equipment found in such a workshop usually consists of such improvised utensils as large tubs, enamelled pans, buckets, jugs, drying trays, and an oven or stove. Other materials used in the conversion process are slaked lime, ammonium chloride, hydrochloric acid, and various paper and cloth filters (Figure 3). The only other necessity for a morphine base workshop is a readily available source of water.



Figure 3. Seized Morphine Base Conversion Equipment

21. The conversion process begins by steeping the opium for several hours in a large tub over a stove until it completely disintegrates. This process requires about two gallons of water for every three pounds of opium. About one pound of slaked lime for every pound of opium is then added to the mixture. This produces the basic morphine lime salt. This salt is filtered through cloth straining sacks in order to remove the insoluble debris and by-alkaloids (Figure 4). In order to obtain the optimum amount of final product, the debris will normally be mixed again with water and refiltered.



Figure 4. Morphine Base Strainer and Chemical Solution

22. About one pound of ammonium chloride for every pound of opium is then stirred into the solution. The solution must then stand for several hours to enable the morphine base to precipitate completely. The remaining solution is then discarded and the morphine base filtered and dried.

23. The finished product is a powdery substance with a consistency similar to raw sugar. It has a light tan color and feels somewhat sticky (Figure 5). Once sealed and packaged, the morphine base will retain its potency indefinitely.

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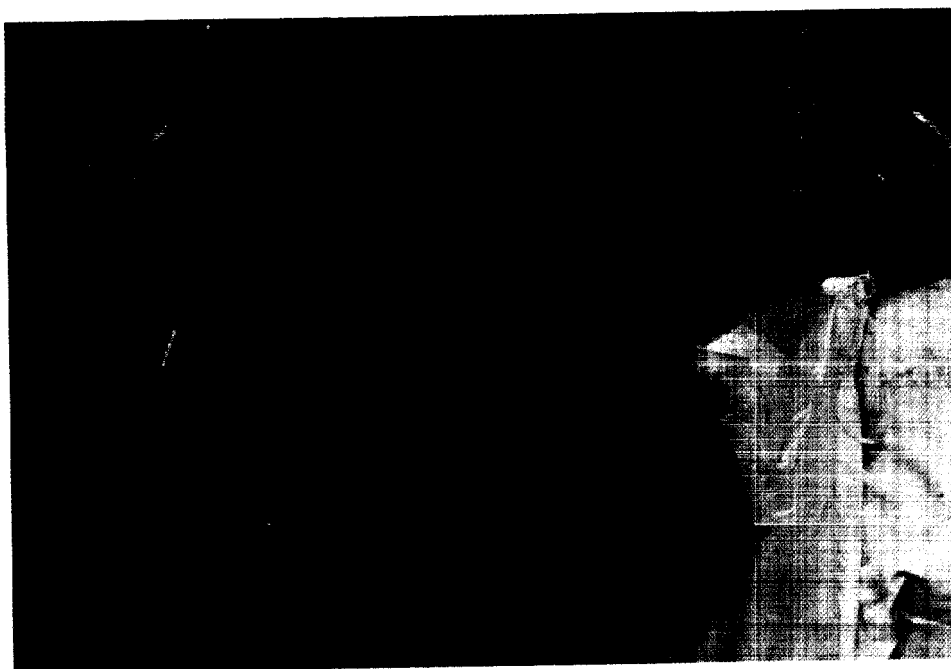


Figure 5. Raw Opium and Morphine Base

24. Following the conversion process, the utensils are usually scrubbed clean and stored while the disposable materials and opium residue are discarded. The workshop is then cleaned and all traces of illicit activity are removed. In order to protect the security of the workshop location, the finished morphine base usually is removed from the processing site and stored in a depot located in another area. As an added precautionary measure, the workshop location is often changed.

#### The Basic Trafficking System: Turkey-France

25. The entire illicit opium and morphine base trafficking system, from the purchase of crude opium to morphine base delivery in France, consists of a series of interrelated but separate buyer-seller transactions. Although no two transactions may ever be exactly the same, a general trafficking pattern can be discerned among the larger and best-organized trafficking groups. The pattern often can be broken down into five basic steps centered around various key individuals in the system.

##### *Step 1 - Interior Trafficker*

26. The basic character in the illicit narcotics trafficking system is the interior opium trafficker. This person operates in the interior of Turkey and initiates the illicit process by buying crude opium from opium poppy

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farmers. Most interior traffickers conduct their operations by sending representatives to various farmers to solicit opium purchases. Some traffickers may estimate the amount of opium they can dispose of in the coming year and pay farmers in advance to plant a given amount of poppies for their organization. Other traffickers simply send representatives to various farms to offer top prices in order to meet their requirements. After the harvest, the traffickers send their men from farm to farm to collect the opium which will be stored in isolated and protected depots.

*Step 2 - Morphine Base Conversion*

27. The opium trafficker may next convert all or a part of the bulky crude opium into its concentrated, compact, and odorless morphine base form. Major traffickers normally have their own conversion facilities. One such trafficker reportedly once had an entire village involved in the operation of 40 conversion workshops. Those traffickers who do not have their own conversion facilities can send their opium to independent workshops where the opium will be processed for them for a fixed fee. Smaller traffickers may simply limit their activities to buying opium for resale to the larger interior traffickers. The interior traffickers thus serve as the source of supply for "exterior" traffickers who specialize in selling the narcotics to foreign customers. Some interior traffickers, however, occasionally bypass "exterior" traffickers and sell direct to foreign customers.

*Step 3 - Commission Man*

28. The so-called commission man is a middleman who receives a commission from both the interior trafficker and the exterior trafficker if he is successful in locating and purchasing opium or morphine base for the latter. When dealing with a new supplier, the commission man may have to advance a portion of the sales price in order to ensure his good faith. If a large order is required, the commission man will contact several interior traffickers until the total amount is accumulated.

*Step 4 - Exterior Traffickers*

29. The exterior trafficker is normally the pivot in Turkey between the internal suppliers and the foreign customers. The first requirement for a prospective exterior trafficker is a large amount of money -- \$50,000 to \$75,000 -- with which to finance the first large transaction in opium or morphine base. In order to obtain this money, the would-be trafficker will often borrow funds from one or more of his legitimate businesses or obtain a high-interest loan from an underworld loan shark. A more common practice, however, is to find two or three partners who will put up equal



funds for an equal share of the profits. If this partnership is to continue, much of the profits from the first transaction will be reinvested into a second purchase of narcotics. Once firmly established in the trade, the Turkish traffickers are able to ask for a substantial advance payment from their French connections to cover a part or all of their operating expenses.

30. A major exterior trafficking group can consist of as few as two members or as many as five or more. Each group usually has one leader who oversees the entire operation, including the negotiations with the French connections, the purchase of the narcotics, and perhaps even the smuggling operations. On equal footing with the leader, but divorced from the actual operations, are the silent partners. These individuals are often high-ranking figures in the Turkish underworld who own one or more legitimate businesses. The silent partners and their legitimate businesses normally will not become involved in handling the narcotics. A third element associated with a trafficking group is the commission man who may either belong to the group or act as an independent middleman. Most groups also have a transportation man who picks up the opium or morphine base from the interior suppliers and transports it to the trafficker's storage depots. This same individual may also be in charge of planning external smuggling operations. If the group has its own morphine base conversion facilities, a fifth member, a "chemist", will oversee the conversion operations.

*Step 5 - Negotiations, Communications, and Payments*

31. Initial negotiations between prospective French and Turkish connections are normally conducted on a person-to-person basis in Turkey. During this meeting, the discussions will most likely center around the price, methods of payment, and means of delivery.

32. Communications between buyer and seller usually are handled through couriers or messengers, by telegram, or through the use of mail drops in Turkey and France. In the latter case, air mail letters are mailed to either connection using a previously established alias. The letters are sent in care of a private residence or business where the nominal addressee is aware of the true identity of the connection. These drops are changed whenever the mail appears to have been tampered with. In urgent cases, these traffickers have also used the telephone, but always with caution.

33. Payment for narcotics deliveries to France is normally made in cash. In many cases, anywhere from 20% to 50% or more of the order is paid for in advance. This money may have been furnished by a silent partner associated with the French connection. The Turkish traffickers prefer advance payment since it establishes the good faith of the buyer, furnishes the traffickers with funds to purchase the opium or morphine

base, and can be used to cover at least part of the traffickers' losses if shipments are seized prior to delivery.

34. Arrangements for the final payment and narcotics delivery are usually made in France a few days prior to scheduled delivery. In cash transactions, French francs are often given to a courier who either delivers them directly to Turkey or exchanges them for Turkish lire in Beirut where a higher exchange rate often can be obtained. French traffickers often pay for their narcotics shipments with firearms or cigarettes. In these cases, the contraband materials are usually smuggled into Turkey using the same smuggling methods employed in the narcotics delivery.

35. French traffickers also make use of European banks when paying for narcotics shipments. In this type of transaction, the buyer opens a letter of credit at a bank in favor of the seller for an amount of money equal to the cost of the shipment. Once the seller is notified that the funds have been designated in his name or to his account, he will authorize the delivery of the narcotics. Upon receiving the shipment, the French buyer will authorize the bank to release the funds to the designated payee. Other banking arrangements simply involve payments by check made out to the seller's bank account in France, Germany, or Switzerland.

#### Variations To The Basic System

36. There are four principal variations to the direct Turkey-to-France procedure. They can be separated into (a) narcotics transactions handled by Syrian and Lebanese traffickers, (b) those using the services of Middle Eastern or German middlemen residing in West Germany, (c) transactions involving Italian middlemen, and (d) illicit operations conducted by independent small-time operators.

37. Narcotics traffic passing through the Middle East normally involves two associated trafficking groups operating out of Syria and Lebanon. These transactions are handled primarily by Lebanese traffickers who first negotiate a narcotics deal with their French connection and then order the supplies from their Syrian associates. The Syrian traffickers in most cases have been receiving a fairly steady flow of crude opium purchased from Turkish opium traffickers. The morphine base conversion process in this type of transaction normally takes place in Syria using Syrian "chemists" who reportedly are much more skilled and turn out a better grade of morphine base than their Turkish counterparts. When the supplies are ready for shipment, the Lebanese traffickers will be responsible for smuggling them to Lebanon and from there to France.

38. This type of transaction apparently has become less common in recent years. Lebanese traffickers now tend to pick up their morphine base supplies in Turkey, thereby eliminating the Syrian middlemen. The Lebanese traffickers either smuggle the narcotics directly from Turkey to France or bring them back to Lebanon for shipment to France.

39. Narcotics trafficking through the Federal Republic of Germany generally can be divided into two types of transactions -- those that use Germany as a temporary storage depot and those that involve a Middle Eastern or German middleman. In the first case, narcotics are simply sent to one or more associates of a Turkish trafficking group who reside in Germany. The narcotics are stored there until a buyer can be found or until final arrangements for a sale can be made with an existing French connection.

40. The second type of transaction involves the outright sale of narcotics to a Turkish, Middle Eastern, or German middleman residing in Germany. The middleman thus becomes an independent trafficker who must arrange his own illicit narcotics system and find his own connections in France. Since two separate trafficking groups are involved in this type of transaction, the final cost for the narcotics delivery in France may be from 50% to 300% higher than for the direct Turkish-French transaction.

41. In addition to the middlemen operating out of Germany, middlemen operating out of Italy are sometimes involved. These Italian traffickers may either act as agents for a French group or as independent narcotics importers. In the first case, the Italian group uses its connections in Italy to facilitate the transit of narcotics from Turkey to France. In the second case, the Italian group finds its own connections in Turkey and imports the narcotics into Italy for eventual resale to French groups.

42. Independent narcotics trafficking is too varied to be submitted to a general description. These transactions normally involve relatively small quantities of narcotics that are sold and smuggled to any prospective trafficker -- in Turkey or elsewhere -- by opium farmers or small-time traffickers. The total amount of narcotics entering the illicit French market in this manner is not believed to be significant when compared to the quantity handled by the major Turkish traffickers.

#### Historical Patterns of Smuggling

43. The pattern of narcotics smuggling from Turkey to France can be divided into three overlapping phases covering the last 15 years. During the first phase, from the 1950s to early 1960s, crude opium was usually shipped to France via Lebanon. As much as three-fourths of all opium

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smuggled to France during this period is believed to have transited Beirut. In addition to smuggling opium, narcotics traffickers also handled limited quantities of morphine base which were converted in Syria. Virtually all of the opium not smuggled through Lebanon was shipped directly from Turkey to France using seamen couriers.

44. By the mid-1960s, morphine base began to replace opium as the principal raw material shipped to the French heroin traffickers. During this period, Syria emerged as the prime morphine base conversion center for Turkish opium. As the need for the narcotics increased and as customs procedures tightened, narcotics smugglers began to realize the advantages that the smuggling of morphine base offered over opium. First, it was much easier to package and conceal. Second, it did not emit the distinct odor that crude opium did. Even more important, however, was the fact that one kilogram of morphine base produced the same amount of heroin as ten kilograms of opium, and therefore the same amount of money or more could be earned for smuggling only one-tenth the quantity of narcotics.

45. Another change brought about by increased product demand and tighter international controls at this time was the increase in narcotics smuggling directly from Turkey to France. Turkish traffickers began to rely somewhat less on seamen couriers and began to smuggle narcotics over land using specially constructed compartments in cars, trucks, and buses to hide the illicit cargo. When seamen couriers were used, special arrangements were made whereby the narcotics could be unloaded at various ports in Italy if "the heat was on" in Marseille.

46. The third basic smuggling phase began in the mid or late 1960s and has continued to the present. During this period, the use of Syria as a morphine base conversion center declined drastically, giving Turkish traffickers practically a monopoly over both opium and morphine base production. Increased internal security measures in Syria following the 1967 war may have had an effect on Syria's declining role. The importance, therefore, of Syrian and Lebanese traffickers has waned dramatically during the last several years.

47. Available evidence indicates that overland smuggling has now become the most common means to smuggle opium and morphine base from Turkey into Western Europe. Although narcotics are still sent by ship, the emphasis has apparently changed from port delivery to off-loading on the high seas.

48. The most significant change during this period, however, has been the emergence of West Germany as a major opium and morphine base storage depot and staging area. A large part of all narcotics shipped overland

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from Turkey to France is now believed to pass through Germany. The narcotics are either sold to traffickers living in Germany or are transshipped from there to France.

#### Methods of Smuggling

49. The methods a smuggler may use to transport narcotics from Turkey to France are limited only by the scope of his imagination. An analysis of known methods -- both past and present -- indicates that there are certain general practices and common routes followed by many such smugglers.

#### *Overland*

50. The most popular method of smuggling narcotics into Western Europe apparently is through the use of specially constructed compartments or "traps" built into passenger cars, commercial trucks, and touring buses. The cost for having such a compartment built may range from about \$150 for simple traps in a car to a few thousand dollars for large traps built into international touring buses. Automobile traps are often constructed behind the front headlights, in the inner base of each fender, inside door panels, inside the upholstery, under the dashboard, under the floor, in the gas tank, and underneath the trunk. These traps on a European car will normally hold about 75 to 100 kilograms of narcotics.

51. A typical truck trap might consist of a false truck bed, cab wall, or ceiling measuring one foot deep and holding about 200 kilograms of narcotics. The trucks used to smuggle opium and morphine base out of Turkey often belong to legitimate international trucking companies which frequently haul legal cargos from the Middle or Near East and Turkey to Western Europe. Although the *modus operandi* will vary, a typical operation begins with the loading of a bonded consignment of legitimate cargo in Turkey or Iran. Following a customs inspection, a metal customs bond strip will be placed over the truck's cargo doors. The truck driver upon arriving at the Turkish narcotics depot will pick the lock on the customs tag, load the narcotics, and then relock the tag. These trucks, carrying a customs seal, will then be able to travel across national frontiers with little or no controls.\* The number of such trucks traveling to Europe is so great that systematic inspections are not possible. If no advance information is available, these trucks will be allowed to proceed without examination as long as the customs seal appears to be intact.

\* These legitimate international truck shipments are often accompanied by a "Transport International Routier" (TIR) carnet. The TIR carnet is a booklet that ordinarily allows shipments under customs seal to transit a country, or move from a port of entry to destination, without customs inspection. All major European countries adhere to the TIR Convention of 1956.

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52. The overland shipment of narcotics to Western Europe requires several preparations. The traffickers must first procure the services of a courier and arrange for traps to be built into his car. The courier must then be briefed on foreign customs procedures, customs connections (if any), and suggested routes. In some cases, particularly if a new procedure is involved, the traffickers will conduct a "dry run" to inspect road conditions, customs enforcement, etc. The courier will also be given contact plans and the number of someone to call in case of trouble.

53. A day or two after the courier leaves for Western Europe, the trafficker or his representative will fly to the point of delivery and make final arrangements for the delivery to the customer. He will then meet the courier at a prearranged location and at that time instruct him as to where to make the actual delivery. The trafficker will often meet the courier in a neighboring country and follow the car carrying the narcotics across the last frontier in order to verify that the shipment made it through. The courier generally will receive about \$80 for each kilogram of morphine base he successfully smuggles into France from Turkey. Thus one load of 200 kilograms will earn a Turkish smuggler about \$16,000 for one week's work.

54. Delivery procedures from Turkey to middlemen in West Germany are similar to those made in France. Other shipments to Germany will only remain in the country for temporary storage and subsequent reshipment to France. In these cases, the narcotics are unloaded from the original vehicles and eventually transferred to a less suspicious vehicle owned and driven by a European national who will carry the narcotics into France. Once in France, the European courier often will hand over his shipment to the originating Turkish trafficker who in turn will deliver it to his French connection.

55. The German trafficking operations are often similar to those in Turkey. The German groups usually employ the services of a commission man who often will be given round-trip fare to France, expense money, and a narcotics sample and be asked to find a customer. The traffickers, after finding a connection, will then hire a courier to transport the narcotics from Germany to France. The most common smuggling method for this type of shipment is the private car. One recent report states that narcotics are now also being smuggled from Germany to France on board German ships bound for Marseille. Turkish and Middle Eastern traffickers reportedly are relying much more on European couriers, vehicles, and ships since anything coming into France from another European country is much less suspect than anything or anyone coming from Turkey. The European courier's fee for smuggling morphine base from Germany into France averages about \$50 per kilogram.

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*By Sea*

56. The smuggling of opium and morphine base by sea, although perhaps less popular than a few years ago, still accounts for a large amount of the narcotics entering France. In a typical sea smuggling operation, one or more seamen are hired in Turkey to oversee the shipment of narcotics to a specified Mediterranean port. The choice of port usually depends on customs security and the availability of a cooperating customs official. The narcotics are delivered to a cargo ship shortly before the ship's departure and then smuggled on board. This loading procedure often involves the complicity of a port customs official. The seaman courier is then instructed how and where to contact the Turkish trafficker's representative, who will be waiting at the port of delivery. Frequent use is made of prearranged recognition signals in order to facilitate identification.

57. There are two principal means of smuggling narcotics by sea. The first is to unload the narcotics before entering the port. This procedure, usually carried out off the coast of southern France, can be accomplished by transferring the shipment to a smaller craft at a prearranged rendezvous, or by throwing the shipment overboard at a predetermined spot. In the latter case, the bags of narcotics are weighed down by lead weights to hide them from surface view and then marked by a special buoy. The shipment will be retrieved after the ship leaves the area by a smaller boat belonging to the French traffickers. Because of the navigational planning required, this type of operation normally involves the complicity of the ship's captain or other senior crew members.

58. If the delivery is to be made at the port of Marseille, the courier will first contact the trafficker's representative to determine how strict port security is at that time. If port security is judged to be too tight, the courier will most likely be instructed either to deliver the shipment at another port - usually in Italy or Spain - or deliver it to Marseille on the ship's next call. Many Turkish ships will stop at Marseille three or four times during their month-long voyage out of Istanbul or Izmir (Figure 6).

59. The unloading of the narcotics from the ship is generally the responsibility of the French buyer. The process often involves the collaboration of a port customs official who may receive up to \$100 for each kilogram of morphine base he helps to unload. When a cooperating customs official is not available, the narcotics may be smuggled ashore in the seaman's personal effects or in the ship's cargo, or it may be transferred to an adjoining boat that has been moored there for that purpose. The availability of a cooperating customs official is judged so valuable, however, that the entire smuggling pattern and port of delivery may shift to wherever this accomplice is stationed.

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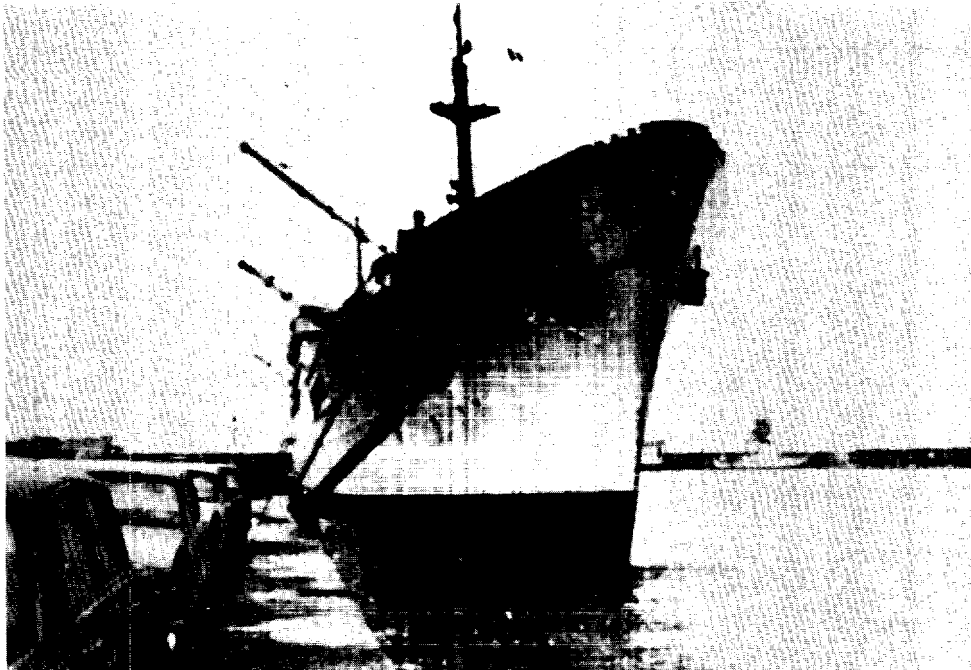


Figure 6. Typical Turkish Ship Used for Narcotics Smuggling

60. The overland and sea smuggling methods are sometimes combined whereby the narcotics are hidden in a car which is transported by ship from Turkey or Lebanon to a West European or Mediterranean port. The car is then taken off the ship and driven from the port to France. This method reduces the number of customs searches undergone by the shipment.

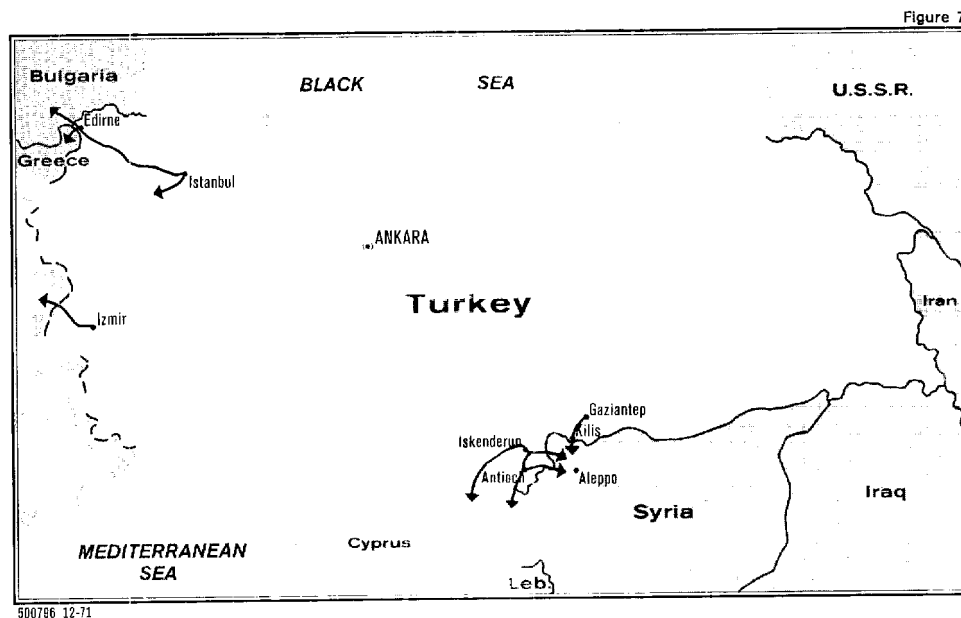
*By Air*

61. The smuggling of narcotics by air appears to be the least popular smuggling method. In one type of airline smuggling operation, a package containing narcotics is taken to an accomplice working at a commercial airline freight office. This accomplice takes care of the air freight labeling process and delivers the package to a cooperating customs official. The package, with customs clearance stamps, is then flown to France and picked up by the French connection. Another type of airline smuggling involves the secreting of packages containing narcotics on board an aircraft by a member of the ground crew. The package will later be removed by a confederate ground crew member in France.

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62. The simplest type of airline smuggling involves the carrying of narcotics in a false bottom suitcase by an airline passenger. This method is widely used by French traffickers to smuggle heroin into the United States. Although this method of smuggling morphine base apparently has been used more by Lebanese traffickers than by those in Turkey, recent reporting suggests that the latter may now be using this method more frequently. The smuggling of narcotics into Western Europe by airline passengers may increase in popularity in light of the lax customs procedures at most European airports.



### Smuggling Routes

#### *Turkey (Figure 7)\**

63. Opium and morphine base must be transported clandestinely from the interior storage depots to the depots located closer to the various points of embarkation in Turkey. While being transported, the unwrapped crude opium is usually carried in large burlap bags, while the morphine base is carried in sealed plastic bags which serve as linings for outer cloth bags. The cloth bags are often tied at the neck and will occasionally carry a lead seal. These bags are frequently carried inside commercial 18-liter oil cans, which facilitate transport and storage. The bags or cans are normally transported inside Turkey by private cars and trucks equipped with special traps.

64. There are several key transit areas in Turkey through which the illicit narcotics tend to pass. Shipments destined to France via Syria or Lebanon are first moved to the Syrian border near the cities of Iskenderun, Gaziantep, Kilis, or Antioch. From these cities, the narcotics are sent overland into Syria or by sea to either Syrian or Lebanese ports.

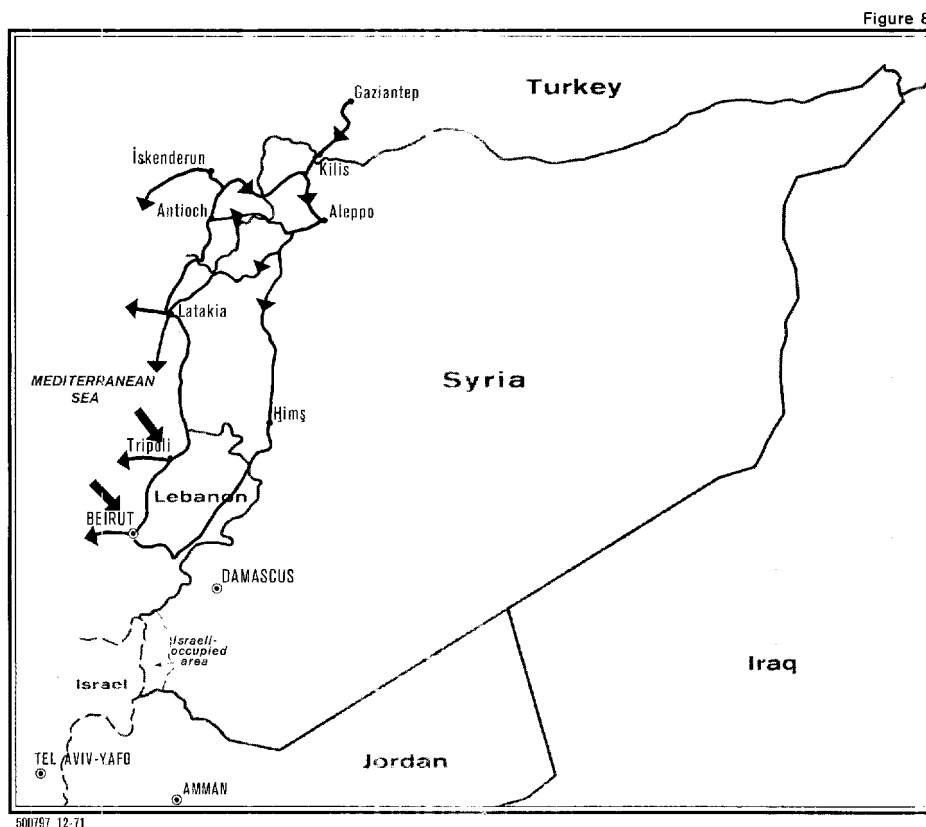
65. Most narcotics earmarked for direct shipment to France or West Germany will usually leave Turkey via the ports of Istanbul and Izmir or

\* The following maps indicate known and suggested smuggling routes commonly used by narcotics smugglers.

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overland via Istanbul to the Turkish frontier post at Edirne. Edirne is located on the Turkish-Greek-Bulgarian frontier and has been a major exit point for all overland shipments leaving Turkey for Western Europe over the last 15-20 years. The complicity of various customs officials from all three countries at this key location has facilitated the movement of narcotics into Western Europe since the 1950s.

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*Syria and Lebanon (Figure 8)*

66. Most opium smuggled into Syria usually enters through Kilis or through the roads coming from Iskenderun and Antioch. The opium is usually carried in cars and trucks, but may also be carried by mule train. The border controls in these areas are few in number and generally primitive, making narcotics smuggling a relatively easy matter (Figure 9). Most of these shipments are taken to the city of Aleppo, traditionally the major morphine base conversion center for Middle Eastern traffickers. Morphine base from Aleppo is usually carried overland through Hims or Latakia into Lebanon.

67. Some of the narcotics enter Lebanon by ship from either the Turkish port of Iskenderun or from Syria's major port at Latakia. From Latakia, the narcotics may either be transshipped to Lebanon or sent directly to France. The Lebanese ports of Beirut and Tripoli serve as major entry and exit points for illicit narcotics.

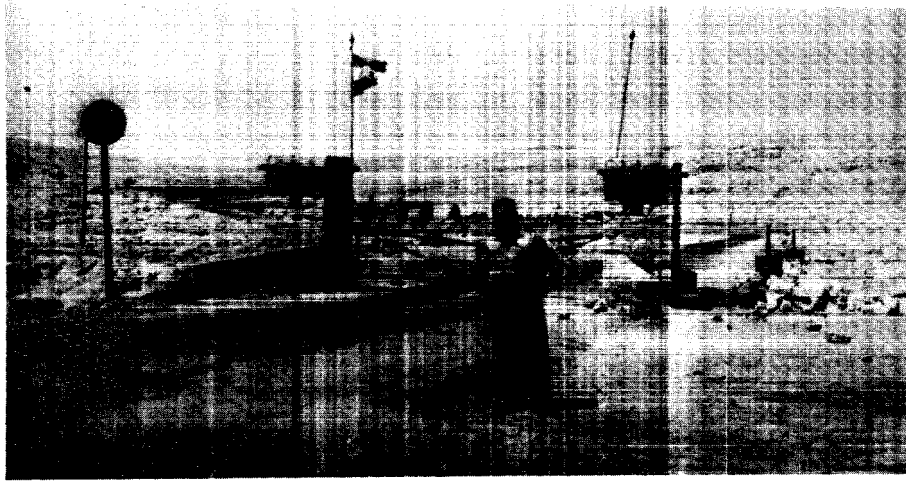


Figure 9. Syrian Border Post

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*Bulgaria* (Figure 10)

68. The role of Bulgaria in the field of international narcotics has increased tremendously in the last several years. Most of the opium and morphine base carried overland from Turkey to Western Europe travels through Bulgaria. More important than its transit role, however, is the recent trend by some Turkish traffickers to use Bulgaria as a safehaven from where major narcotics operations are directed. Sofia has been described as the "new center" for directing narcotics and arms trafficking between Western Europe and the Near East. French and UK police officials have also voiced their belief that Bulgarian government officials may be actively involved in selling seized Turkish narcotics to French traffickers.

69. Turkish and Iranian vehicles leaving Turkey at Edirne may be subjected to customs inspection at Kapitan Andreevo, located near Svilengrad. However, Bulgarian trucks hired to haul Turkish cargos reportedly are normally excluded from inspection. The general consensus among narcotics smugglers is that this Bulgarian customs inspection is the most dangerous search they face during their entire trip. The detailed search for narcotics often includes the use of specially trained dogs as well as a thorough search for traps in the undercarriage and ceiling of suspected trucks. It is reportedly because of this careful examination that many narcotics smugglers refuse to attempt to secrete and carry more than 200

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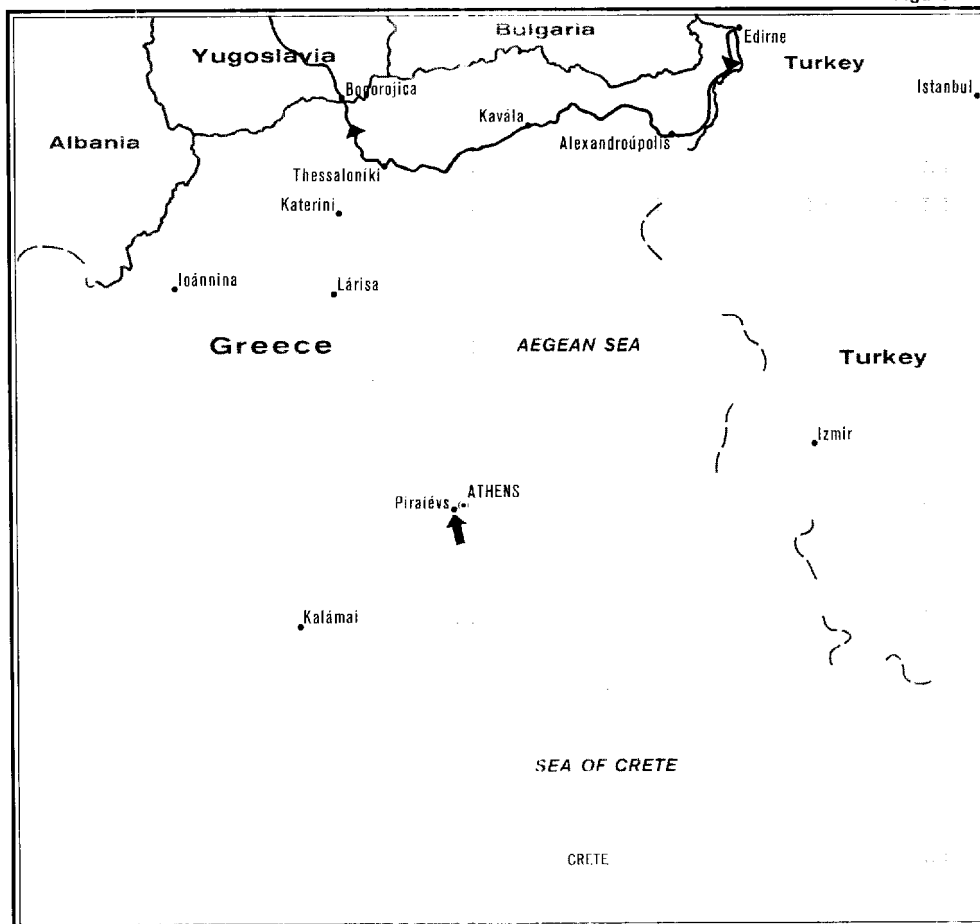
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kilograms of narcotics per shipment. These detailed searches, however, are not conducted primarily to stop the flow of narcotics to Western Europe but to increase the revenue of the local customs officials. If a narcotics smuggler is caught in Bulgaria, he reportedly pays a small fine for the violation and then is given the opportunity to repurchase his seized shipment of narcotics for a certain percentage of its estimated value. The apprehended smuggler thus loses only a small part of his courier's fee and a few hours of his time before he is allowed to continue with his shipment. The Bulgarian route probably passes through Kharmanli, Plovdiv, and Sofia before leaving Bulgaria at Kalotina.

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Figure 11



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Greece (Figure 11)

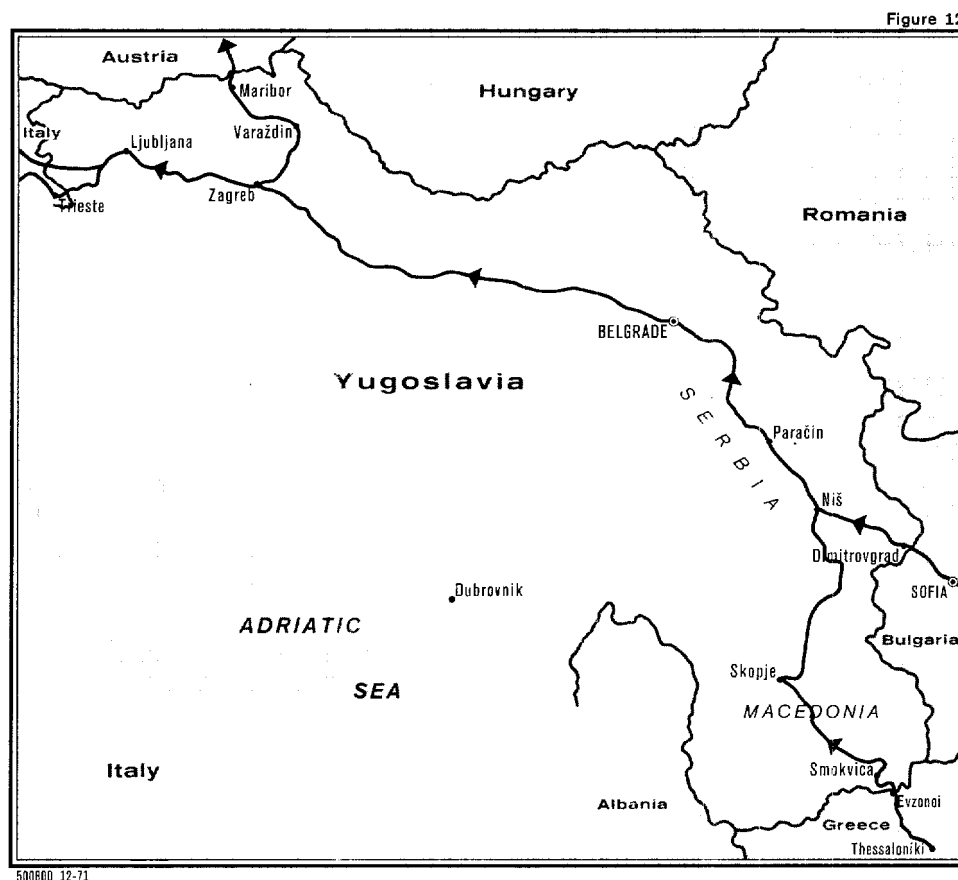
70. Greece serves as a secondary transit area for passenger vehicles carrying narcotics out of Turkey and as an alternative for those traffickers wishing to avoid playing the Bulgarian customs game. The only known major entry point for these illicit shipments is at Edirne. The apparent pattern is for the narcotics to be driven through Alexandroupolis and Kavala to Thessaloniki. From there the vehicles generally turn north and proceed across the Yugoslav border.

71. A second means of smuggling narcotics into Greece is by ship. In addition to the narcotics smuggled via the larger Turkish cargo ships that regularly call at Piraeus, smaller ships reportedly also carry opium and morphine base from various Turkish ports to numerous smaller Greek ports. From there, the narcotics probably are taken by car to their final destination.

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*Yugoslavia* (Figure 12)

72. Virtually all of the opium and morphine base smuggled overland from Turkey to Western Europe travels through Yugoslavia. Despite reported attempts to strengthen customs controls, the number of customs officials has remained frozen at pre-World War II levels. Only about 20 smugglers of all kinds of drugs are arrested each year at the various Yugoslav customs stations. The apprehended smugglers reportedly receive only a prison term of three or four months and a fine as punishment. In addition to the Turkish narcotics transiting Yugoslavia, an undetermined amount of Yugoslav opium is also smuggled from its Macedonian growing areas to traffickers in France or West Germany.

73. There are two principal entry points for illicit narcotics. Shipments coming from Greece normally enter Yugoslavia through the province of Macedonia near Smokvica, while shipments from Bulgaria enter through the Serbian city of Dimitrovgrad. Most narcotics seizures in Yugoslavia are made at Dimitrovgrad. Whether coming from Greece or

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Bulgaria, the principal smuggling route passes through Nis and Paracin to Belgrade and from there via highway to Zagreb. There, the smuggler is faced with two alternatives. He may either continue west through Ljubljana to the Italian border and then France, or he may turn north and travel through Maribor on his way to West Germany.

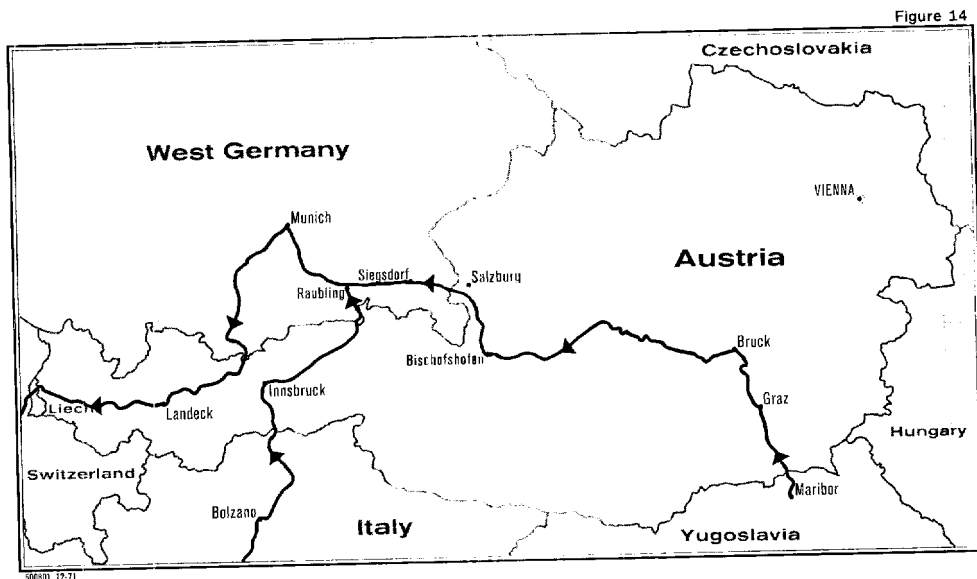
74. In addition to Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, illicit narcotics may also be transiting other East European countries. Although the evidence is still fragmentary, an undetermined amount of morphine base reportedly is being shipped to Western Europe via Hungary. The specific routes, however, are unknown.

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Italy (Figure 13)

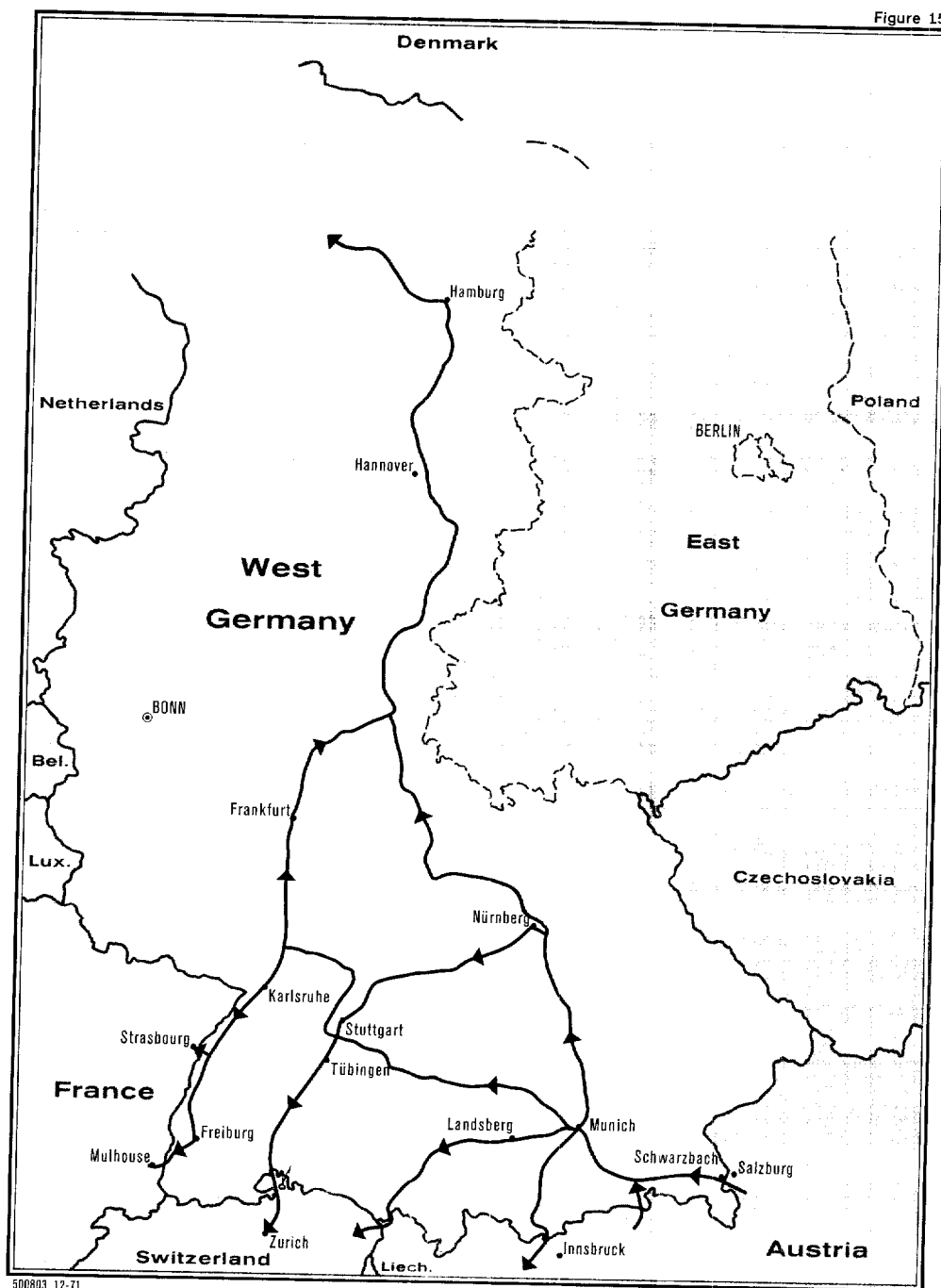
75. Italy has been a major narcotics transit area for more than 15 years. Illicit narcotics from Turkey enter Italy in two ways -- overland from Yugoslavia through Trieste or Gorizia and by sea via Trieste, Venice, Naples, or Genoa. Many smaller Italian ports, such as Bari and Brindisi, have also been used as narcotics entry points. Shipments arriving by sea are usually driven to France via Genoa or Torino or driven to West Germany apparently via Verona, Bolzano, and Innsbruck. Narcotics shipments entering Italy from Yugoslavia usually proceed to France via Venice, Verona, and Milan and from there through either Torino or Genoa. Milan has also frequently been used as a major operational and storage base by Italian morphine base and heroin traffickers.



*Austria (Figure 14)*

76. Most of the narcotics shipments destined for West Germany pass through Austria. The principal route for narcotics entering Austria from Maribor, Yugoslavia, appears to go through Graz, Bruck, and Bischofshofen to just south of Salzburg where the Austrian road connects to the Munich autobahn at Schwarzbach. A secondary route used for narcotics shipments entering Austria from Italy passes through Innsbruck and probably follows the Inn River to Raubling, Germany, before turning west toward Munich.

77. Austria is also used as a transit route for narcotics heading from West Germany to France. The major route in this case is believed to enter Austria northwest of Innsbruck and proceed through Landeck into Switzerland.



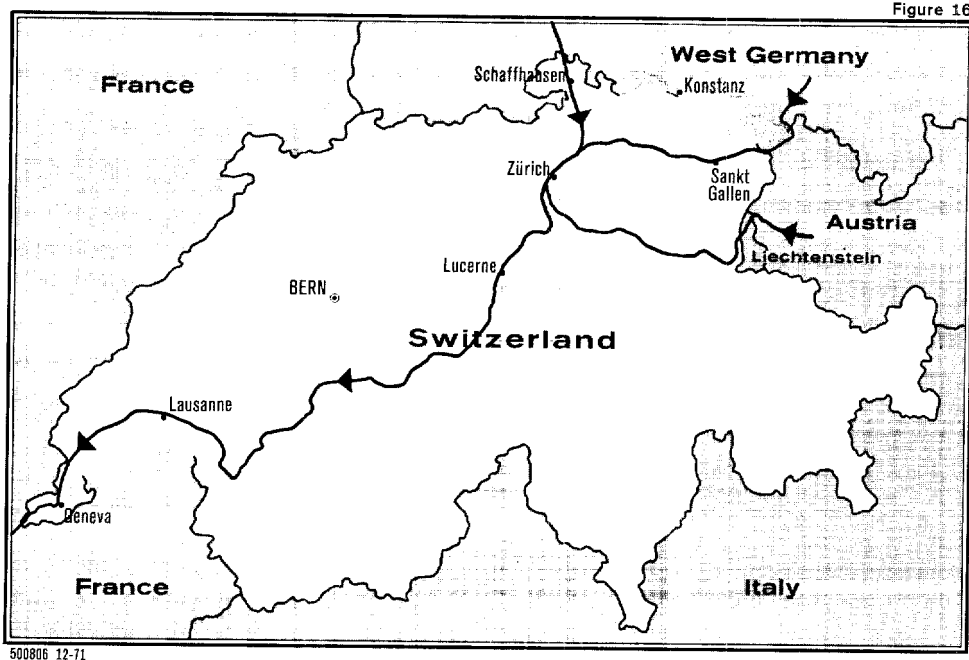
West Germany (Figure 15)

78. Beginning in the late 1960s, large numbers of Turkish and other Near Eastern workers began to immigrate to West Germany. By 1970, the need for labor had swollen their number to some 400,000. Many of these

Turkish, Syrian, and Iranian nationals have entered the drug smuggling and trafficking business from their residences in West Germany. They, often together with German partners, have established major storage and staging areas across West Germany. The three known principal storage/staging areas are located in or near Munich, Frankfurt, and Hamburg.

79. Most of the Turkish opium and morphine base brought into Germany is believed to enter the country through the Schwarzbach border crossing near Salzburg and another crossing opposite Innsbruck. The customs control problem at these crossings was recently summarized by a Bavarian criminal magistrate who stated: "Each year 2.5 million automobiles cross the Schwarzbach freeway border station. After all, we cannot take every car apart and search it for narcotics." Narcotics shipped from Germany to France often travel via Landsberg and Tübingen into Switzerland and through Karlsruhe and Freiburg into France.

80. Not all of the morphine base leaves Germany. According to German newspaper estimates, there are about 15,000 drug addicts throughout the country. Some of these addicts are consuming a narcotic substance referred to as "Berlin tincture," a heroin-like drug produced by processing morphine base with acetic acid and distilled water. There have also been unconfirmed reports that some of the morphine base is being converted into heroin in West Germany.

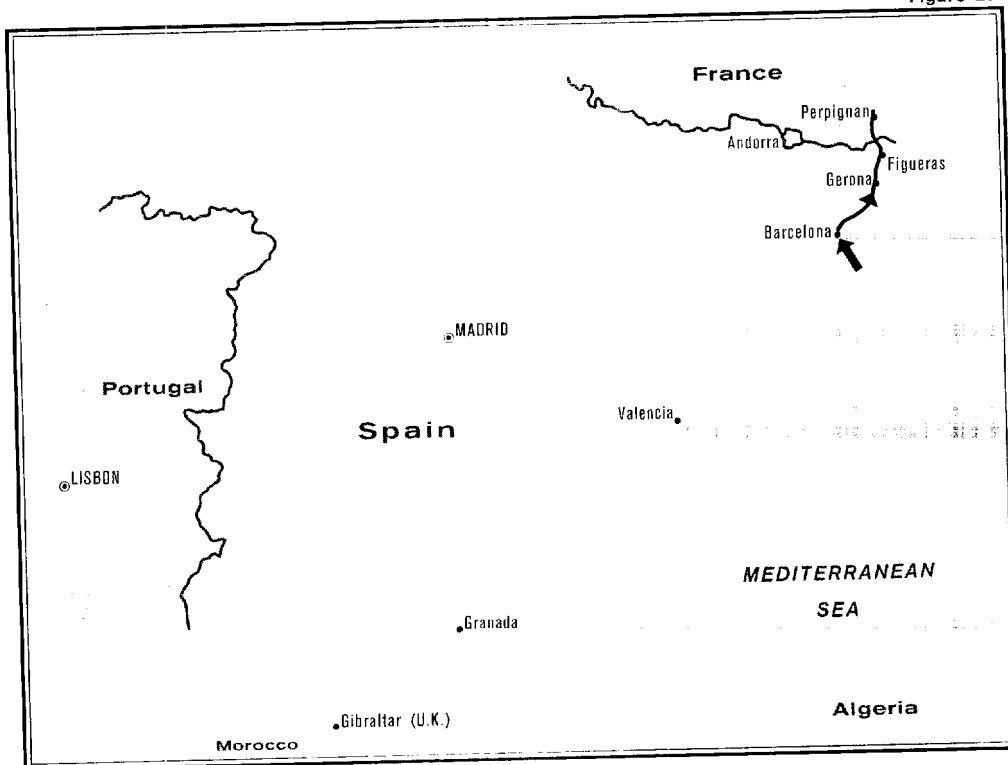


*Switzerland* (Figure 16)

81. In addition to serving as a favorite banking area and meeting place for many narcotics traffickers, Switzerland also serves as a transit area for narcotics shipped from Germany to France. Although these shipments enter Switzerland at various points on the Austrian and German borders, most shipments appear to travel through Zurich before turning south through Lucerne and Lausanne to Geneva and then France.

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Figure 17

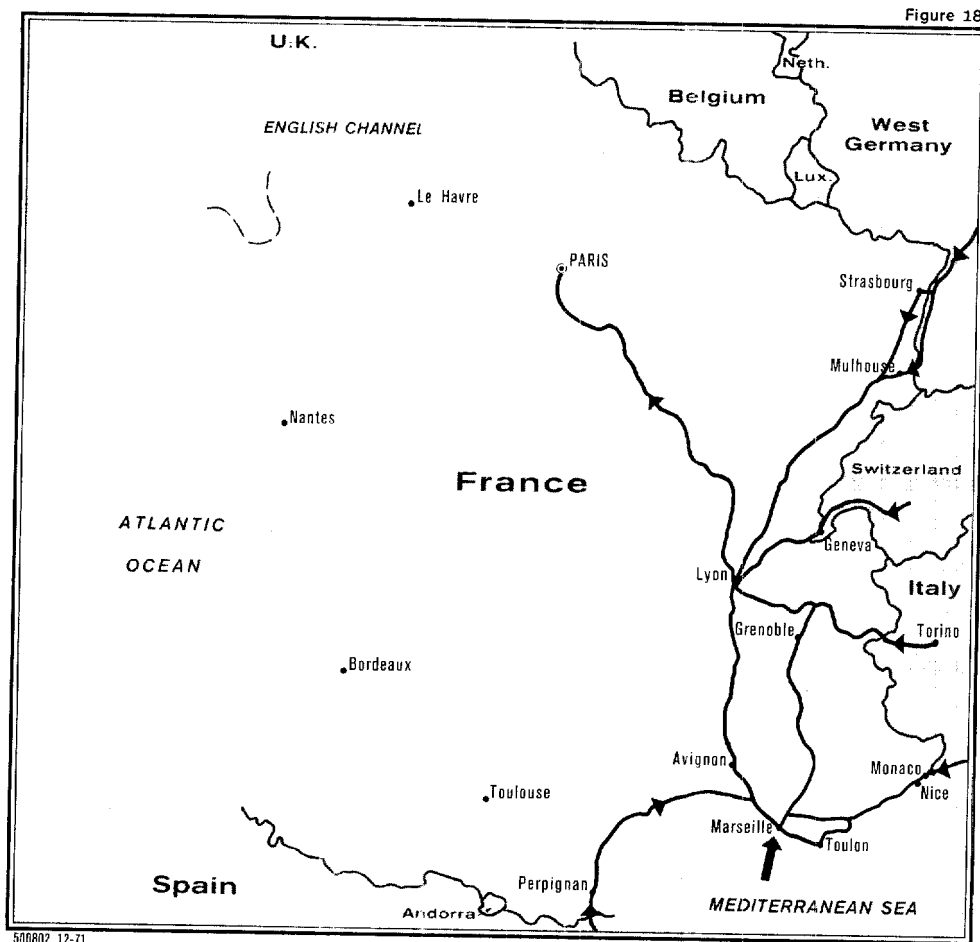


Spain (Figure 17)

82. French traffickers use Spain primarily in smuggling heroin from France to the United States. There have also been some unconfirmed reports that heroin is being produced there. Spain, however, is involved in the smuggling of opium and morphine base into Europe. Narcotics traffickers reportedly have increased their use of Spain, and particularly the port of Barcelona, as an entry point for Turkish narcotics. Using this route, the shipment is delivered by ship to Barcelona and then driven into France via Girona and Figueras.

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*France* (Figure 18)

83. Virtually any road, port, or airport has or can be used to bring opium and morphine base to the heroin processing sites in France. There are, nonetheless, certain popular routes that many traffickers have used when delivering narcotics to the two principal known French narcotics receiving areas – Marseille and Paris. Marseille is by far the most popular point of entry for shipments arriving by sea. Narcotics destined for Marseille overland from Italy tend to travel via the road leading from Torino to Grenoble or via the road linking Monaco, Nice, and Toulon. Those shipments destined for Paris often will proceed via Grenoble to Lyon and then over national highway to Paris.

84. The most common French border crossing point for narcotics transiting Switzerland is outside of Geneva. Vehicles using this route usually will head south to Lyon and then either continue south via Avignon to

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Marseille or turn north at Lyon and travel to Paris. Border crossings near Strasbourg and Mulhouse apparently are quite popular with smugglers transporting narcotics from Germany to France. The only other known smuggling route into France is the road from Barcelona to Marseille which passes south of Perpignan and follows the coastline to its final destination.

#### The Outlook

85. On 30 June 1971 the Turkish government announced that it would reduce the opium production areas from the seven authorized provinces in 1971 to four provinces in 1972. The government also banned the production of all opium following the 1972 harvest. The elimination of authorized poppy cultivation and opium production in Turkey, if successfully monitored, should eventually put an end to a close, cheap, and plentiful source of supply for the French heroin processors.

86. Knowledge of the gradual elimination of opium production in Turkey reportedly prompted French traffickers and their financiers to begin planning in 1970 to buy out and stockpile as much opium and morphine base as possible. These plans reportedly are still being carried out and will most likely continue to be executed as long as opium remains available in Turkey.

87. In addition to formulating stockpiling plans, however, French traffickers undoubtedly have also been planning how and where to get their narcotics supplies after their Turkish sources dry up. There is unfortunately little information presently available concerning these plans. French traffickers have previously received small amounts of opium from Yugoslavia and even less from the Far East. So far as is known, opium from Pakistan and Afghanistan has not yet been tapped by the French. An attempt to maintain the pace of heroin production in France could involve any or all of these countries.

88. The source most frequently mentioned by French traffickers as to future potential is Yugoslavia. The largest known French importer of opium and morphine base stated prior to his arrest earlier this year that if the supplies from Turkey were ever reduced, he and other French traffickers would look to Yugoslavia as a potential steady source of supply. He, as well as other important French traffickers, has often praised the quality of Yugoslav opium which has even a higher morphine content than Turkish opium.

89. Virtually all of the opium produced in Yugoslavia is grown in the region of Macedonia which covers the southern part of Yugoslavia and crosses into northern Greece and western Bulgaria. Total opium production

estimates from Yugoslav officials have varied considerably over the last five years -- from a high of 50 tons in 1966 to five tons in 1970. There are no authoritative estimates as to how much of this or other unauthorized opium in the Macedonian region has entered the illicit market, although illicit opium trafficking between Yugoslavia and France has been going on for at least ten years. In 1965, at least two major French traffickers reportedly obtained Yugoslav opium from a source based in Trieste. The seizure of 15 kilograms of Marseille-bound Yugoslav opium near the Yugoslav-Italian border in October 1971 indicates that this traffic is still continuing.

90. Narcotics traffickers in the Far East reportedly have smuggled minor quantities of smoking opium and morphine base into France. Large quantities of opium and morphine base are produced in Southeast Asia, and there appear to be no insurmountable obstacles to a shift by French traffickers to use of morphine base of Asian origin. The other major opium producing area which may be explored by French traffickers is the Near East. Although the quality of Pakistani and Afghan opium is not as high as that produced in Turkey, these areas remain a significant potential opium source. Poppy cultivation and opium smuggling are well established occupations in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Most of the illicit opium from this area, however, is smuggled into Iran to meet the needs of Iran's large number of narcotics addicts.

91. Of the three main alternative sources of supply of opium and morphine base, Yugoslavia appears to be the first area to which French traffickers will turn. This option is likely to have only a minimal impact on the patterns and techniques of opium smuggling now existing in Europe. If adequate supplies of opium and morphine base are not forthcoming from Yugoslavia, however, these traffickers may turn to either Pakistani-Afghan sources or Southeast Asian sources. This would likely cause a major realignment of the smuggling routes now serving French traffickers and could raise the costs associated with the French traffic.

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**Publications and Related Papers  
in the International Narcotic Series**

- ✓ BGI GR 71-4 -- The Illicit Production and Movement of Opiates in Latin America, January 1971, SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM.
- ✓ BGI GR 71-5 -- Opium Production and Movement in Southeast Asia, January 1971, SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM.
- ✓ BGI GR 72-1 -- Opium Production and Movement in the Near East and South Asia, July 1971, SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM.
- ✓ ER IM 71-102 - Recent Trends in the Illicit Narcotics Market in Southeast Asia, May 1971, SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM.  
(International Narcotics Series No. 1)
- ✓ ER IM 71-155 - Chemical Requirements for Opium Refining in Southeast Asia, August 1971, SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM.  
(International Narcotics Series No. 2)
- ✓ ER IM 71-166 - Paraguay -- Heroin Crossroads of South America, August 1971, SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM.  
(International Narcotics Series No. 3)
- ✓ ER IM 71-197 - The Cocaine Situation in Latin America, October 1971, CONFIDENTIAL.  
(International Narcotics Series No. 4)
- ✓ ER IM 71-212 - Opium Poppy Cultivation in Northern Thailand, October 1971, CONFIDENTIAL.  
(International Narcotics Series No. 5)

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**Confidential**

**SECRET**

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Memorandum for the Record

Subject: DOD Request for Advice on Replying to Congressional Inquiries  
Regarding CIA Alleged Involvement in Transport of Drugs

- 25X1A 1. On 1 June 1971, Col. Everett Hopson, DOD Special Assistant for Drug Abuse Control, [REDACTED] phoned to state that DOD had received letters from Senator Fred Harris and Congressman Bingham inquiring about reports that CIA-controlled aircraft had been used for the transport of drugs in Southeast Asia. Col. Hopson said he intended to reply that DOD had no information on this subject, but he wished to check with the Agency in the event the Agency preferred some other course of action.
- 25X1A 2. I called Mr. [REDACTED], to inform him of this inquiry. He stated that Col. Hopson's proposed response to the letters seemed the best under the circumstances, but he asked me to touch base also with Mr. Maurey, Legislative Counsel, or in his absence with Mr. [REDACTED] or Mr. [REDACTED] of that office.
- 25X1A 3. Mr. [REDACTED] suggested I inform Col. Hopson that Congressman Gubser had recently received from Mr. Ingersoll, BNDD, a reply to a similar inquiry which Gubser intended to have printed in the Congressional Record on 1 June. This communication served the Agency's interests well and, it was hoped, would serve to forestall further Congressional inquiries along the same lines. Mr. [REDACTED] suggested that, if Col. Hopson, could put off his replies to the letters he had received until 2 June, he could make reference to the item in the Record. Otherwise, Col. Hopson's intention to indicate no knowledge of CIA involvement would be appropriate.
- 25X1A 4. Col. Hopson was informed of the expected appearance of the Gubser item, and he indicated he would like to refer to it in his replies to Harris and Bingham.
- 25X1A 5. The Gubser item did not appear on 1 July as expected, but it did appear on 2 July. (Item beginning on page E5305 is attached.) On 3 July I informed Col. Hopson of this. He expressed appreciation for this, and I thanked him for alerting the Agency to the Harris and Bingham queries.

25X1A [REDACTED]

cc: [REDACTED] Office of Legislative Counsel  
[REDACTED]

25X1A

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**SECRET**

STATINTL

TRANSMITTAL SLIP		
TO: <i>ML</i> [REDACTED] <i>OLC</i>		
ROOM NO.		
REMARKS:  <i>For your retention</i>  <i>Drug file</i>  <i>gbl</i>		
FROM:		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	EXTENSION